

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 NIC-01

/058 W

----- 026488

R 281353Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5222

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMCONGEN ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 2672

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, AU, YO

SUBJ: OUTLOOK IS FOR CONTINUING IMPASSE IN SLOVENE MINORITY
CONTROVERSY

REF: A. VIENNA 2007

B. VIENNA 1834

SUMMARY: MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH SLOVENE
MINORITY CONTROVERSY SERVE TO UNDERLINE EXISTING IMPASSE
BETWEEN GOA AND SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS OVER NEED FOR "SPECIAL
MINORITY CENSUS" AS PRECONDITION FOR ERECTION OF BILINGUAL
ROAD SIGNS AND IN BROADER CONTEXT, FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION
OF ARTICLE 7 OF 1955 STATE TREATY. AUSTRIAN DOMESTIC
POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, PARTICULARLY UPCOMING NATIONAL
ELECTION CAMPAIGN TERMINATING IN OCTOBER ELECTIONS, PRECLUDE
ANY NEW GOA INITIATIVES ON KEY ISSUES IN CONTROVERSY.
ABSENCE OF ANY GOA FLEXIBILITY HAS, IN TURN, IMPACTED
NEGATIVELY ON AUSTRIAN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE SEVERAL LESS
CONTENTIOUS BILATERAL ISSUES WITH YUGOSLAVIA. IMPASSE ON
BOTH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS FRONTS THEREFORE IS
LIKELY TO CONTINUE, GIVEN NATURE OF CURRENT CONSTELLATION
OF FORCES AT WORK. END SUMMARY

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1. MARCH 19 MEETING BETWEEN CHANCELLOR KREISKY AND

SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS DEVELOPED NO NEW IDEAS OR APPROACHES FOR DEALING WITH CONTROVERSY OVER FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 7 OF 1955 STATE TREATY. KREISKY REITERATED GOVERNMENT VIEWPOINT THAT "SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS", TO BE SUBSUMED IN GENERAL CENSUS, WAS PREREQUISITE TO FURTHER ACTION ON BILINGUAL ROAD SIGN ISSUE. SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS VOICED AGAIN THEIR CONTINUING OPPOSITION TO "SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS" AND THEIR REFUSAL TO COOPERATE IN ANY SUCH UNDERTAKING. SOLE, MEAGER RESULT OF GATHERING WAS AGREEMENT BY SLOVENE MINORITY SPOKESMEN TO SUBMIT TO CHANCELLOR IN NEAR FUTURE MEMORANDUM OUTLINING PROBLEMS OF SLOVENE MINORITY.

2. IN MEETING ON MARCH 17, STUDY COMMISSION ON SLOVENE MINORITY PROBLEMS (GATHERING OF GOVERNMENTAL AND ACADEMIC EXPERTS, NO SLOVENE MINORITY INPUT) DISCUSSED QUESTION OF NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF MINORITY WHICH MUST BE PRESENT IN COMMUNITY FOR PURPOSE OF RECOGNITION AS MINORITY AND THEREFORE ERECTION OF BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS. COMMISSION REPORTED THAT INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PRACTICE OF OTHER COUNTRIES OFFER NO CLEAR GUIDANCE ON SUBJECT. FIVE TO THIRTY PERCENT WAS DISCUSSED AS RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES. COMMISSION AGREED HOWEVER THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD HAVE TO FIX PERCENTAGE, THEREBY TOSSING POLITICAL FOOTBALL BACK TO SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT.

3. INZKO SUGGESTION IN EARLY MARCH (SEE REF A) THAT PERHAPS GOA MIGHT ASK SIGNATORY POWERS TO 1955 STATE TREATY TO GIVE "AUTHENTIC INTERPRETATION" OF ARTICLE 7 HAS BEEN QUICKLY REJECTED BY SPOKESMEN OF TWO SLOVENE MINORITY UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS. SERIOUS DOUBTS WERE REGISTERED THAT SUCH AMBASSADORS' CONFERENCE COULD EVER BE ARRANGED. SUBMISSION OF MINORITY ISSUE TO UN WAS VIEWED AS MORE VIABLE APPROACH.

4. INFORMED SENIOR AUSTRIAN MFA SOURCE HAS INDICATED THAT GOA CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE YUGOSLAVS TO MOVE FORWARD ON RESOLUTION OF LESS CONTENTIOUS BILATERAL ISSUES (E.G. RETURN TO YUGOSLAVIA OF CULTURAL PROPERTIES AND ARCHIVAL CONFIDENTIAL

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MATERIAL) BUT THAT YUGOSLAVS ARE NOW SEEMINGLY DISINTERESTED ON THESE ISSUES, DESCRIBING THEM AS INSIGNIFICANT. ONLY BILATERAL UNDERSTANDING ACHIEVED THUS FAR WAS "GENTLEMEN'S" AGREEMENT TO CEASE STERILE, POLEMICAL EXCHANGE OF NOTES. AUSTRIAN MFA CONCLUDES THAT GOY DOES NOT WISH TO IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS AT THIS JUNCTURE AND THAT THEREFORE PERIOD OF TURBULENCE IN AUSTRO-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE.

5 KNOWLEDGEABLE YUGOSLAV EMBASSY SOURCE HAS OBSERVED THAT SEVERAL UPCOMING EVENTS IN AUSTRIA (CROATION EMIGRE OPEN-AIR CELEBRATION IN CARINTHIA IN MAY AND NATIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN TERMINATING IN EARLY OCT) HOLD LITTLE PROMISE FOR ANY IMPROVEMENT IN STATE OF YUGOSLAV-AUSTRO RELATIONS. HE MADE POINT THAT YUGOSLAVIA HAS WAITED ALMOST 20 YEARS FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION BY AUSTRIA OF ARTICLE 7 OF 1955 STATE TREATY; IT CAN WAIT ANOTHER FEW MONTHS UNTIL OCTOBER NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN AUSTRIA HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.

6. COMMENT: KREISKY'S ESTIMATE OF POLITICAL CURRENTS ON DOMESTIC SCENE AND THEIR LIKELY IMPACT ON OCTOBER NATIONAL ELECTION OUTCOME WILL BE HIS LODESTAR IN DEALING WITH SLOVENE MINORITY CONTROVERSY UNTIL AT LEAST END OF 1975. DEFEAT IN EARLY MARCH OF SLOVENE MINORITY EFFORT TO GAIN REPRESENTATION IN CARINTHIA PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY AND SURPRISINGLY EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE OF SOCIALISTS IN SAME ELECTIONS, ON BASIS OF NATIONALIST-ORIENTED CAMPAIGN, (REF B) WERE CLEAR SIGNALS TO KREISKY OF NEED TO CONTINUE SOCIALIST APPEAL TO NATIONALIST ELEMENTS IF NEWLY REGAINED NATIONALIST VOTES ARE TO REMAIN IN SOCIALIST COLUMN AT OCTOBER ELECTIONS. KREISKY WILL THUS CONTINUE TO STRESS FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION "SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS" AS SINE QUA NON FOR RESOLVING CONTROVERSY. VIS-A-VIS YUGOSLAVIA, GOA APPROACH WILL BE TO TRY TO IMPROVE ATMOSPHERICS IN RELATIONS BY GETTING YUGOSLAVS ENGAGED IN DIALOGUE ON RETURN OF CULTURAL PROPERTIES, A MOVE WHICH, ACCORDING TO YUGOSLAV EMBASSY SOURCE, IS UNLIKELY TO SUCCEED. AS IN RECENT PAST, KREISKY'S SCENARIO FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES IS TO LIMIT NEGATIVE FALLOUT ARISING FROM CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTROVERSY BY ATTEMPTING TO MANAGE IT WITHOUT HOWEVER RESOLVING IT. ACCORDINGLY, IMPASSE ON BOTH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS FRONTS IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE. END COMMENT. TRINKA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, MEETINGS, POLITICAL PARTIES, PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS, MINORITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975VIENNA02672
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750109-0704
From: VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975034/aaaaadrd.tel
Line Count: 158
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 VIENNA 2007
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 APR 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <07 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OUTLOOK IS FOR CONTINUING IMPASSE IN SLOVENE MINORITY CONTROVERSY
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, AU, YO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006